HORSESHOE BEND

BRIG. GEN. JOHN COFFEE TO MAJ. GEN. ANDREW JACKSON

Fort Williams, 1st April 1814

Sir.

Agreeably to your order of the 27th Ultimo, I took up the line of march at half past six Oclock A.M. of the same day with a detachment of seven hundred cavalry and mounted gunmen and about six hundred Indians, five hundred of which were Cherokees and the balance friendly Creeks – I crossed the Tallapoosey river at the little Island ford about three miles below the bend, in which the enemy had concentrated, and then turned up the river bearing away from its clifts – when within half a mile of the village the savage yell was raised by the enemy, and I supposed he had discovered and was about to attack me. I immediately drew up my forces in line of battle in an open hilly woodland, and in that position moved on towards the yelling of the enemy – previous to this I had ordered the Indians on our approach to the bend of the river to advance secretly and take possession of the bank of the river and prevent the enemy from crossing on the approach of your army in his front – when within a quarter of a mile of the river, the firing of your cannon commenced, when the Indians with me immediately rushed forward with great impetuosity to the river bank – my line was halted and kept in order of battle, expecting an attack on our rear from the Oakfuskee villages, which lay down the river about eight miles below us - The firing of you cannon and small arms in a short time became general and heavy, which animated our Indians, and seeing about one hundred of the Warriors and all the squaws and children of the enemy running about among the huts of the village, which was open to our view, they could no longer remain silent spectators, while some kept up a fire across the river (which is about one hundred & twenty yards wide) to prevent the enemy's approach to the bank, others plunged into the water and swam over the river for canoes that lay at the other shore in considerable numbers, and brought them over, in which crafts a number of them embarked, and landed in the bend with the enemy - Colo. Gideon Morgan [Jr.] who commanded the Cherokees, Capt.[Hugh] Kerr, and Capt. William Russell, with a part of this company of Spies was amongst the first that crossed the river, they advanced into the village and very soon drove the enemy from the huts up the river bank to the fortified works from which they were fighting you – they pursued and continued to annoy them during the whole action - This movement of my Indians forces left the river bank unguarded and made it necessary that I should send a part of my line to take possession of the river bank. I accordingly ordered about one third of the men to be posted around the bend on the river bank, whilst the balance remained inline to protect our rear - Captain Hammonds company of Raingers took post on the river bank on my right and during the whole engagement kept up a continued and destructive fire on those of the enemy that attempted to escape into the river and killed a very large proportion of those that were found dead under the bank as well as many others sunk under water - I ordered Lieutenant Bean to take possession of the Island below with forty men, to prevent the enemy's taking refuge there, which was executed with promptitude, and which had a very

happy effect, as many of the enemy did attempt their escape to the Island, but not one ever landed, they were sunk by Leut. Beans command ere they reached the bank, and that few was killed the instant they landed – From the report of my Officers as well as from my own observation, I feel warranted in saying that from two hundred & fifty to three hundred of the enemy was buried under water and was not numbered with the dead that was found – My loss was two white men killed and ten wounded – and twenty three friendly Indians killed and forty seven wounded – making in the whole of my detachment, twenty five killed and fifty seven wounded – I left my position after you had gained possession of the bend and the enemy's works, and after the few who survived had taken shelter under the banks of the river, and marched up thro' the Newyorker village, crossed over and joined the main army at seven Oclock P.M. during the action all the men and Officers of my detachment acted their several parts well – no one neglected to do the duty assigned to him with great firmness – Quarter Master [Joshua] Haskell attached himself to Capt Hammonds company, and fired not less than fifty rounds at the enemy during the course of the day and no doubt, done much execution.

I am Sir very respectfully you very Humble Servant Jno. Coffee Brigd. Genl.

Source: Horseshoe Bend NMP historical files.